

STATE OF THE SCHOOLS REPORT

HIGHLIGHTS

October 24, 2014

BACKGROUND

The State of the Schools Report will be released to the public on Fri., Oct. 24, 10 a.m.

The following talking points are highlights from the report.

- This report provides data and information about Nebraska public schools and their students.
- Individual school district administrators are the best source of information about their own school districts since they best know their data and their students.
- At the state level, we will discuss only state results.

SOSR MESSAGE

- District results under Nebraska's state accountability system, NePAS, which looks at improvement and growth, showed:
 - ✓ Reading Improvement: 75 percent of Nebraska districts showed improvement
 - ✓ Reading Growth: 82 percent of the districts showed improvement when the scale scores of the students this year were compared to the same students the previous year
 - ✓ Math Improvement: 65 percent
 - ✓ Math Growth: 62 percent
 - ✓ Science Improvement: 53 percent
- Even though Nebraska schools demonstrated improvement in test scores and 53 percent or 132 districts are at their All-Time Best.
- The federal rules have labeled 52 districts and 480 schools as In Need of Improvement.
- The federal school accountability system is flawed and fails to provide useful information to our communities, our schools and our students.

- **Nebraska will continue to develop a system to encourage improvement for the benefit of our system.**

MESSAGE DETAILS:

- **Nebraska student test scores improved this year in math and science with better than 7 of every 10 students scoring proficient.** (71 percent of the students are proficient in math and 72 percent in science.)
- **Reading scores remain at 77 percent proficient statewide, which means better than 3 of every 4 students scored proficient in reading.**
- **And 53 percent or 132 Nebraska school districts tied or reached All-Time Best scores this year.** All-Time Best combines the percent of students proficient in reading, mathematics and science and compares the total percent proficient with data for comparable past years.
- **Yet, under federal NCLB legislation, 480 Nebraska schools and 52 districts were labeled needing improvement.**
- **The federal accountability system is NOT working.**
- **Most agree, NCLB mislabels schools and misleads the public.**
- **A breakdown showed 265 Title 1 schools and 215 non-Title 1 schools are labeled needing improvement as well as 50 Title 1 districts and 2 non-Title 1 districts have the same label.**
- **This is unfair to our teachers who work hard to provide excellent educational opportunities to all students.**
- **Federal labels brand an entire school community as failing even though that is not the case.**
- **The Nebraska Department of Education does not agree with the current federal policy. And I do not believe that all of our schools are low performing.**
- **Nebraska can do accountability right.**
- **Educators know test scores are important but that it is unfair to make a judgment or decision about a student or a school on the basis of one test score.**
- **Nebraska's strong commitment to every student, every day is the basis of a new era of public school accountability, a system named A QuESTT: Accountability for a Quality Education System, Today and Tomorrow.**

- A QuESTT will expand our current system that ranks schools and districts on student state test scores, graduation rates and participation on state tests to look at the quality of the education practices in a school or district to ensure continuous improvement.
- Continuous improvement is the key.
- To fully implement A QuESTT, Nebraska will need sound data that allow the state to measure more quality indicators such as, whether districts are graduating college and career ready students; school district educator effectiveness; how the school supports students transitioning between grades, programs or other schools; postsecondary and career education opportunities available to high schoolers; and, the availability and quality of parent and community engagement programs.
- The State Board of Education is expected to consider approving the first phase of A QuESTT in December.
- This is the beginning of a new era of school accountability that provides information that leads to school improvement.

NEW IN SOSR

- Student performance for groups of students (disaggregated data) on state tests. (Nebraska statewide test scores for all schools and districts were released earlier.)
- State and federal accountability decisions.
- Graduation rates and state accountability rankings by graduation rates will be released in November.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Student performance trend data on NeSA tests (percent proficient combined for all grades):

- Math and science scores improved when compared to previous years. Reading scores were stable. Writing scores are not available this year.

	Reading	Mathematics	Science	Writing
2009-2010	69 %			
2010-2011	72 %	63 %		
2011-2012	74 %	67 %	67 %	
2012-2013	77 %	69 %	70 %	68 % ^
2013-2014	77 %	71 %	72 %	-- ^^

PERFORMANCE FOR STUDENT GROUPS

Percent Proficient

Student Groups	Reading	Math	Science
All students	77%	71%	72%
Hispanic	64%	56%	51%
American Indian/Alaska Native	50%	43%	39%
Asian	76%	73%	67%
Black or African American	56%	42%	40%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	67%	63%	55%
White	83%	79%	81%
Two or More Races	74%	66%	66%
Students eligible for free and reduced lunch	65%	58%	56%
Special Education Students	47%	42%	41%
English Language Learners	54%	49%	29%

STATE ACCOUNTABILITY: NePAS Results

Nebraska's accountability system ranks school districts by their students' average scale scores on state tests.

IMPROVEMENT compares scale scores of different students in the same grade, year-to-year.

GROWTH compares the scale scores of the same students, this year to last year.

- District results showed:
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 - ✓ Reading Growth: 82 percent of the districts showed improvement when the scale scores of the students this year were compared to the same students the previous year
 - ✓ Math Improvement: 65 percent
 - ✓ Math Growth: 62 percent
 - ✓ Science Improvement: 53 percent

In summary, trend data show Improvement and Growth results were mixed.

	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Reading Improvement	185 of 248 districts	205 of 248 districts	186 of 248 districts
Reading Growth	198 of 248 districts	205 of 248 districts	203 of 248 districts
Math Improvement	177 of 248 districts	169 of 248 districts	162 of 248 districts
Math Growth	181 of 248 districts	141 of 248 districts	153 of 248 districts

Science Improvement	First Administration of NeSA-S	172 of 248 districts	131 of 248 districts
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- District rankings by the grade configurations are available on the report by Status, Improvement or Growth.

FEDERAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Under NCLB federal legislation requirements, 100 percent of students were required to be proficient in 2014. NCLB is a failed education system that most think mislabels schools and misleads the public.

Overwhelmingly, states have sought waivers to NCLB. Congress has failed to reauthorize the outdated legislation since 2007, which that was to occur. Nebraska continues to talk to policy partners and U.S. Department of Education officials about waiver requirements.

Under NCLB, Title 1 schools designated as needing improvement must comply with certain federal sanctions.

2014 AYP results showed 265 Nebraska schools and 50 districts were designated as needing improvement.

Here are the federal sanctions placed on Title I schools/districts designated as needing improvement:

- ✓ Year 1: Schools/districts are required to set aside an amount equal to 20 percent of their Title I funds and to offer public school choice to students
- ✓ Year 2: Set aside 20 percent of their Title 1 funds and offer public school choice to students and Supplemental Education Services (tutoring)
- ✓ Year 3: Schools/districts are required to choose one of several corrective action options such as implement a new curriculum, seek assistance from an outside expert, extend the school year or school day
- ✓ Year 4: Plan for restructuring
- ✓ Year 5: Restructuring and implementation of plan developed in Year 4

IN SUMMARY

- Schools are encouraged to study their data – specifically gaps in performance among groups of students -- and identify instructional strategies that help all students perform at higher levels. Students who are learning English for the first time in schools, students with disabilities and migrant students oftentimes have greater challenges in the classroom. And, overall, there continues to be gaps in the scores of groups of students when compared to the scores of white students.

- **Nebraska teachers go well beyond what is required to help their students find success in the classroom.**
- **Our job is to continue to support our schools, their teachers and every student, every day.**
- **While collecting and reporting data to inform the public is important, your support is critical to ensure that all Nebraska students are college and career ready when they graduate from high school.**